

CDA PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS

Massive changes get under way for planned city

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) is set to bring in massive changes in the process of approving plans for building construction and planned growth of structures strictly following the zoning system in the port city.

Under the new initiative, CDA will dismantle the Building Construction (BC) Committee or Authorisation Committee to form two such committees with members from other organisations apart from CDA.

Besides, it will form a land use committee or planning committee with a different shape comprising additional number of members.

CDA at its meeting of board of directors on April 4 has approved a draft restructuring both the planning and BC committees.

The board meeting also proposed creation of one additional post of superintendent engineer, separate posts of authorisation officers and increasing number of BC inspectors, sources said.

The proposals will be sent to the ministry of housing and public works soon, they said.

The CDA has a four-member BC Committee headed by its chief engineer to approve the plans of buildings in the port city.

The CDA chairman nominates one executive engineer entrusted with the power of authorisation officer to act as member secretary, one assistant engineer and one assistant town planner as members of the committee.

As per the draft, CDA will have two six-member BC committees headed by two superintendent engineers (SE-1 & SE-2).

There will be two authorisation officers, who might come from CDA or on deputation from any other organisations, to act as member secretaries of the BC committees.

Each committee will have one assistant engineer, an assistant town planner, one representative from Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) and one from Institute of Architects, Bangladesh (IAB) as members.

There will be two 10-member teams under the BC committees at the field level to inspect the proposed site for construction and monitor construction of structures as per the approved plan.

At present CDA has one post of superintendent engineer and seven official posts of BC inspectors without any official post of authorisation officer.

An executive engineer posted as member secretary of the BC committee exercises the power of authorisation officer, sources said.

As per the proposed structure, the chief engineer will head the land use committee or planning committee instead of the chairman.

Three executive engineers in the planning committee will take care of different aspects of area, investment and town planning.

The committee will also include an assistant town planner, an assistant architect, an authorisation officer and representatives from IEB, IAB and Institute of Planning as members.

The planning committee will be responsible for determining zones and layout for residential, commercial and industrial areas, said the sources at CDA.

It will prepare strategy for

planned growth of the city with construction of structures as per the zoning system, they said.

Due to lack of proper monitoring, alternative use of land and construction in deviation of approved plan seriously hampered the planned growth of the city.

Irregularities and corrupt practices in approving plans also attributed to growth of structures defying the zoning system, sources said.

CDA Chairman Shah Mohammad Akhteruddin said, "Formation of new BC committees and planning committee aims at decentralising the power and bringing in transparency in providing approval to plans for construction."

"The proposed committees with additional strength will help CDA show better performance," he said.

Akhteruddin said they have proposed to raise the official posts of BC inspectors to 21 considering the increasing activities of CDA that already had the area under its jurisdiction extended to 445 square miles (1152 square kilometres) from the previous 212 square miles.

"We are introducing floor area ratio in the BC rules where any plan will be approved within 30 days," he said.

"Besides, we are making it compulsory for the developers to be the member of Rehab that would have close association with the CDA for planned growth of the city," he added.

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

The CNG conversion centres in the port city are not able to cope with the rush of petrol, octane or diesel-run vehicles to convert them into Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) ones following the price hike of fuel.

Owners of petrol and octane-driven vehicles are thronging the conversion centres in greater numbers everyday to convert their vehicles.

But there is no respite for the passengers, who in fact know that the fare in public transports will take a hop step when the government decides to increase the fuel price, intensifying their agony.

Owners of City Bus Service said they are yet to increase the fare in their diesel-run buses.

They, however, said they will increase the fare within a few days after publication of the government gazette.

MD Abdul Hakim, Lineman Secretary of City Bus Mini Bus Human Hauler Association, said they did not increase the fare for a long time though the price of fuel had increased on different occasions.

He said it is very difficult to bear the maintaining costs of vehicles due to hike in fuel price.

Although a rush is seen for conversion, many of them are yet to take decision in this regard considering involvement of huge money, he added.

MA Halim, a bus owner, said it costs around Tk 3 lakh for conversion of a diesel-run bus into CNG.

Besides, most of the conversion centres are not capable of converting the diesel-run vehicles like buses and trucks, he said, adding that they convert only the petrol or octane-run vehicles.

It takes Tk 30,000 to 35,000 for conversion of an auto-rickshaw, Tk 45,000 to 50,000



Workers instal a cylinder in a car at a CNG conversion centre in the port city.

for a private car and Tk 90,000 for a microbus, sources said

There are 15 CNG conversion centres in Chittagong. Of them, only Navana and Intraco CNG Limited are capable of converting the diesel-run vehicles.

Most of around 13,000 four-stroke auto-rickshaws in the port city were converted in the past, sources said.

A few private cars and microbuses have also been converted into CNG ones while the diesel-run buses as well as trucks are yet to decide in this

regard, said Md Mostafa Kamal, deputy commissioner (north) and also acting DC (traffic).

He, however, could not tell the exact number of CNG-driven vehicles in the port city.

Vehicle owners, who are willing to convert the engines of their vehicles into CNG due to fuel price hike, are now facing difficulties for lack of adequate conversion centres.

Several owners opted for making advance booking in conversion centres against their vehicles.

Mokhlesur Rahman Mukul, senior executive (marketing) of Intraco CNG Limited, said they are not taking any more booking for conversion as it is already booked for this month (April).

Businessman Bazlur Rashid on Sunday said it took five days to get the serial of Intraco workshop to convert his car into CNG.

He said fuel cost will decrease around 70 per cent after converting the engine into CNG.

Md Yusuf, driver of a private car, said he used to spend Tk 5,000 to Tk 6,000 on petrol and octane a month in the past while he now manages it at Tk 1,200 only after conversion into CNG.



Artists of Sylhet Manipuri Cultural Academy, top, perform Monipuri dance at the four-day folk festival and heritage fair titled 'Matir Tane Praner Gaane' at Nazrul Square. (From bottom left): Tuntun Baul of Kushthia performs Laloni song, Babul, a snake charmer, entertains people and a potter makes clay pot at the festival.

Folk festival ends amid festivity

CU CORRESPONDENT

A four-day Loko Utsab O Puratani Mela (folk festival and heritage fair) concluded in the port city on Sunday amid festivity and enthusiasm.

Loko Utsab O Puratani Mela Parishad organised the festival at Nazrul Square where people from all strata of life thronged everyday.

The festival was organised to acquaint the new generation with folk culture of the country alongside to keep alive the fading culture.

Hundreds of artists from different parts of the country enthralled the

audiences with their performances.

The events included Hinala, bilap, gopborpoga gan, songs of Abdul Latif, Abdul Alim, Hason Raza and Laloni, Mohsen Awlia, folk songs, tribal performances Kirtan, puthi path, banda gan, haldir fada and ghumparani gan, kawali, bhawaiya and Maizvandari, detotota, regional recitations, nobanno and Barabandhun nich.

Kangalini Sufia, Mohammed Shahjahan Munsif, Jhuma Khandaker, Kolyani Ghosh, Iqbal Haider, Kalpana Lala, Shimul Sheel, Alaudin Taher, Prem Sundar Boishnak, Dilip Hore and Madhab

Samanto performed at the festival.

Shobdayan Abriti Academy, Shuvra Sen Gupta and her group, Prama Obonti and her group, Udichi, Abdul Rab Fakir, Aklima Begum and her group, Dirtyo and group, Shah Alami Master and his group, Tilottoma Sen Gupta and her group, Arjya Sangskritik Kendra and Baba Vandari Shilpi Gosthi also participated at the festival.

Stalls displayed books, locally made cloths and toys in the festival.

Discussion meetings on different issues were also held in the afternoon everyday.

Free medication camp held

A daylong free medication and medicine distribution camp were held in the port city on Thursday.

Little Boys Club of city's Pahartali area organised the camp on the Hazi Camp premises.

On the occasion, a discussion was also held.

Prof Mohammed Mosharraf



Visitors at the paintings of artist Nadir Shahriar at an exhibition at Alliance Francaise in the port city on Friday.

STAR PHOTO

the week that was

Disabled Day observed

GrameenPhone brought out a colourful procession and held an open discussion on the occasion of 'National Disabled Day' in the port city on Thursday.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Mokhlesur Rahman led the procession that started from the District Shilpakala Academy and paraded main thoroughfares of the city.

The people with disability joined the procession holding banners and festoons, chanting slogans.

Later a discussion was held at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium where Mokhlesur Rahman was the chief guest with Centre for Disabilities Concern (CDC) Director Mohammed Kamal Uddin in the chair.

Speakers emphasised the need for social safety and employment opportunity for the people with disability.

"Financial development and change of social attitude about them will change their social position," they said.

Eminent Scientist Prof Jamal Nazrul Islam, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Chittagong Convenor Begum Mushtari Shafi, Metropolitan Police Commissioner Moinur Rahman Chowdhury, District Social Welfare Department Deputy Director Syeda Ferdous Akhter, CDC Executive Director Selim Nazrul, Chittagong Club acting chairman Amanullah Al Sagir Chhutti and District Red Crescent Chairman Dr Shahadat Hossain spoke at the discussion.

The annual sports of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet) was held at the university central ground on Friday.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Mir Shahidul Islam inaugurated the sports in the morning.

Mohammed Shahidul Islam became the champions.

Mohammed Shahidul Islam became first in the 100-metre sprint for the boys while Imran Hossain in 200 sprint,

Mohammed Firoze in 400 and 800 sprints and Pollab Biswas in Marathon.

Mohammed Babul Farazi became first in high and long jumps.

Later, the VC distributed the prizes among the winners while Electrical and Computer Engineering Faculty Dean Officer In-charge Azizul Haque, M Masududda Rahman, Habibur Rahman Chowdhury and MG Zakaria also spoke.

Around 800 distressed people received free medication and medicines at the camp.

Dr Mitali Das Gupta, Dr Nahida Farzana Islam, Dr Sujoy Das and Dr Sanjoy Kumar provided the medication.

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Leaders of Chittagong Union of Journalists' (CUJ) and Chittagong Press Club (CPC) recalled the contribution of Khalil Ahmed in journalism recently.

They said Khalil was a bright example of honesty and sincerity in journalism profession.

They were addressing a meeting organised to condole the death of Khalil.

CUJ and CPC jointly organised the meeting at the CPC auditorium on Wednesday.

CPC President Ali Abbas presided over the meeting while former President

Abu Sufian, CUJ President Shahidul Alam, CPC General Secretary Ezaz Yusufi, CUJ General Secretary Reaz Haider Chowdhury, CUJ former President Muhammed Yusuf, Muhammed Idris, M Nasirul Haque, Anjan Kumar Sen and Mushtak Ahmed spoke.

Dental unit at Ma O Shishu Hospital

Chittagong Ma O Shishu General Hospital introduced a dental unit at the hospital recently.

The hospital Executive Committee General Secretary Dr Anjuman Ara Islam formally inaugurated the unit at a function.

The hospital Director (Administration) Major (Retd) Dr Moin-Ul Alam Chowdhury, Assistant Director Dr Nurul Haq, Deputy Director (Finance) Iftekharul Amin, Treasurer SM Morshed Hossain, Dental Surgeon Dr Kamrul Islam, Registrar Dr Liyakat Ali Bhuiyan, Matron Malati Barua and Officer Mosharrat Hossain were present.

The unit is equipped with modern dental chair and other related

equipments.

The dental patients will get treatment with minimum charges in the unit that are running with the financial help of Apex Club of Agrabad.

Reunion at Saint Mary's School

Reunion of former students of Saint Mary's School was held in the port city on Wednesday.

Old Marian Association, an organisation of the former students of the school, organised the daylong programme at Chittagong Club auditorium.

The programme was divided into two sessions. Association President Amanat Hossain gave address of welcome while the former students of 1950s and 1960s took part in the first session.

A cultural programme followed the first session.

The association General Secretary Sufkat Hossain thanked the participants.